United Nations A/53/308

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 August 1998

Original: English

Fifty-third session
Item 107 of the provisional agenda*
Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 50/203 and 52/100, the present report provides updated information on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women by intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The report is the third such report on follow-up presented this year on a rolling basis to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

* A/53/150.

98-25745 (E) 061098

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–4	3
II.	Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective	5–49	3
	A. Results of the 1998 sessions of the Economic and Social Council in the areas of advancement of women, implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming	6–14	3
	B. Follow-up by the United Nations system	15–49	4
III.	National strategies and action plans	50–51	10
IV.	Reported activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions of civil society	52–62	11
V.	Means of implementation, including human and financial requirements	63–73	12
	A. Gender-sensitive programming and budgeting and resource mobilization	63–67	12
	B. Initiatives to increase the proportion of women in Professional posts	68–73	13
VI.	Conclusions	74–76	13

I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/100 of 12 December 1997, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. The Secretary-General, in previous reports to the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the Conference, noted the understanding of the Secretariat that the reports to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly on the subject would be provided on a rolling basis. Each report would briefly summarize results of previous sessions of the other bodies and add new, up-to-date information. Three reports are therefore submitted in the course of a year to the three bodies under the broad heading of follow-up to the Beijing Conference and mainstreaming a gender perspective. An effort is made in each report to provide information that is most pertinent to the respective intergovernmental body in order to facilitate intergovernmental decision-making.

3. Thus, the reports to the Commission on the Status of Women emphasize efforts undertaken by the Secretariat in support of mainstreaming a gender perspective and other follow-up activities. The emphasis of the reports to the Economic and Social Council is on facilitating the coordination function of the Council. The reports to the General Assembly contain information from entities of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies and international financial institutions, as well as a review of activities undertaken at the national level and by non-governmental organizations and other institutions in civil society. Each report contains a section on means of implementation, including human and financial resource requirements.

4. Following this pattern, the present report provides an update of developments that have taken place since the submission to the General Assembly of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Beijing Conference (A/52/281) in 1997.

II. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective

5. The advancement of women, the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women[1] and gender mainstreaming were prominent themes at the sessions of the Economic and Social Council in 1998, and the United Nations system continued its active follow-up to the Beijing Conference during the period under review.

A. Results of the 1998 sessions of the Economic and Social Council in the areas of advancement of women, implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming

6. The three-day session of the Economic and Social Council in May 1998 on the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits provided an opportunity to review the contributions of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to coordinated conference follow-up at the inter-governmental level and throughout the United Nations system. Council resolution 1998/44 on this topic, adopted at its substantive session of 1998, referred, *inter alia*, to the key role of gender mainstreaming in integrated conference follow-up. The Council also adopted a number of thematic resolutions on the advancement of women. Gender issues and mainstreaming were also addressed in sectoral resolutions and agreed conclusions.

7. In its follow-up resolution to agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (resolution 1998/43), the Council decided to pay particular attention to the feminization of poverty, its causes and remedies, when reviewing the theme of poverty eradication in 1999, and to ensure a gender perspective when reviewing the implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits. It requested that any documentation to be prepared for this purpose provide an adequate basis to this end.

8. The Council's humanitarian affairs segment was devoted to the theme "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian activities of the United Nations system". In its agreed conclusions 1998/1, the Council requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, to ensure that a gender perspective was fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies.

9. The coordination segment focused on the theme "Coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action". During the segment, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women participated in a special discussion with other senior United Nations officials. She made proposals for further strengthening attention to the human rights of women in all human rights activities, including through cooperation at the inter-agency level. In agreed conclusions 1998/2, the Council devoted a section to the equal status and human rights of women. Reference was made to the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 and to ongoing coordination and cooperation in the United Nations system. The growing interaction between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights was welcomed, and further action was called for to increase attention to the human rights of women and to gender aspects in the protection and promotion of human rights in mainstream mechanisms. The Council also recommended the continuation of inter-agency consultations at the working level in the future as a forum for cooperation.

10. In resolution 1998/46 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the Economic and Social Council, *inter alia*, addressed the need for gender mainstreaming in terms of the working methods of the functional commissions, documentation to be prepared in these fields, and the Council's relations with its functional commissions.

11. The Council also agreed on the themes for its 1999 substantive session, and decided that the high-level segment would address "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women" (decision 1998/298).

12. The Council's operational activities segment focused on the theme "Advancement of women: implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting, in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development". The report of the Secretary-General contained in document E/1998/54 and Corr.1 surveyed progress in implementing the outcome of the Beijing Conference in the operational activities of the United Nations system. In the report and in the debate during the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment, it was noted that Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all activities of the United Nations system had provided a good framework for achieving policy coherence within the system and for promoting a more coordinated programming approach to the concept of gender mainstreaming.

13. Moreover, also during the high-level meeting of the segment, the centrality of national plans and priorities for operational activities in following up recent global conferences was stressed by members of the Council. At the same time, the pivotal role of the organizations of the United Nations system in fully incorporating a gender perspective into their policies and into operational activities to assist national Governments to implement the commitments arising from these global forums, in particular the Beijing Platform of Action, was emphasized. In this context, the crucial role of the resident coordinator in mobilizing the United Nations system to introduce gender mainstreaming in a coordinated manner at the country level was emphasized. The need for strengthening the role of gender units and gender focal points was recognized. The United Nations development funds and programmes were encouraged to mobilize resources from all available sources and to pay particular attention to allocating resources to gender mainstreaming activities and capacity-building. Donor countries were urged to consider earmarking funds for gender mainstreaming.

14. In its resolution on operational activities (resolution 1998/26), the Economic and Social Council emphasized the need for gender analysis to be an integral part of all operational activities and called for information on follow-up to the Beijing Conference to be incorporated in the triennial comprehensive policy review.

B. Follow-up by the United Nations system

15. The United Nations system has continued to actively pursue the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action since the previous report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/52/281) was submitted to the General Assembly.

16. In his report to the Economic and Social Council (E/1998/53), the Secretary-General reported on the results of the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women and other functional commissions of the Council, as well as on activities carried out by the regional commissions. Notably, the Commission on the Status of

Women at its forty-second session had considered the report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001 (E/CN.6/1998/3). The report and its recommendations highlighted progress made and obstacles encountered by the United Nations system in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, which formed the structure for the system-wide plan. The mid-term review was also taken up by the Committee for Programme Coordination and the Economic and Social Council in 1998. The review provides a detailed picture of implementation.

17. The report of the Secretary-General also reflected the outcome of the third session of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (New York, 25–27 February 1998), which continued its efforts in support of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

18. Information received by the secretariat on efforts to implement the Platform for Action from entities of the United Nations system since the previous report on this subject (A/52/281) is presented below. The present report does not, however, include information on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) since a separate report on its activities (A/53/363) will be before the General Assembly at its present session.

19. The *Population Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs focused on health and mortality, including health and mortality with respect to women, which was the special theme of the Commission on Population and Development in 1998, and work began on an updated study of national abortion policies worldwide. The Commission decided that the theme at its thirty-third session, in 2000, would be "Gender, population and development".

20. The *Statistics Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), initiated the dissemination of gender statistics in user-oriented formats and in a timely manner. Country tables from *The World's Women, 1995: Trends and Statistics*[2] were updated and made available on the Division's Web site. The Division also issued a *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men*,[3] an operational guide for national statistical offices and gender programmes in the compilation of gender statistics and their dissemination in a non-technical format. The Division's work also focused on the measurement of work. Activities included the preparation of trial classifications for time use; participation in a project on informal employment, and collaboration on a project on gender issues and labour force statistics.

21. The *Department of Political Affairs* included gender mainstreaming in its work plan for 1997–1998 and its budget for 1998–1999, making provision for training programmes designed to raise staff members' gender awareness. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office for Human Resources Management collaborated in organizing gender mainstreaming workshops, which were attended by 170 staff members. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs collaborated on the compilation of sex disaggregated data and gender impact assessments. One member of the Department's staff participated in a workshop on women in peace-building and conflict-resolution, and another participated in a workshop on the impact of gender differences in political decision-making and conflict-resolution.

22. The *Department of Public Information* continued its ongoing multimedia communications strategy to support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This was carried out, *inter alia*, through its network of United Nations information centres and services in 67 countries, which produced radio and television programmes and collaborated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to highlight issues related to the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. The Department also covered and promoted the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Department promulgated the 1998 statement on gender equality and mainstreaming of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, through all United Nations information centres.

23. The *Office of Human Resources Management* organized a gender mainstreaming training programme for the Department of Political Affairs and piloted a General Service Effectiveness Training Programme to be conducted Secretariat-wide, benefiting mainly female staff members in the General Service category. The newly implemented Performance Appraisal System was revised to include a mandatory goal for all staff with supervisory responsibilities with respect to goals demonstrating gender and cross-cultural responsiveness. A Quality of Work/Life Task Force analysed various work/life initiatives which are becoming more commonplace in the commercial world and will facilitate balancing work/family life for both male and female staff.

24. The *United Nations Centre for Human Settlements* (Habitat) is currently restructuring and a Gender Unit has

been created directly under the Executive Director with sufficient financial and human resources to ensure the implementation of the comprehensive gender policy. The Commission on Human Settlements, at its 1997 session, approved various resolutions supporting the Platform for Action. As a follow-up action, the activities of the Centre include a comprehensive gender policy; support for the Women for Peace Network: "No Homes Without Peace, No Peace Without Homes"; support for a campaign for women's land and property rights in the United Republic of Tanzania; and the elaboration of gender-aware sustainable environment indicators.

25. The *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development* (UNCTAD) established an internal interdivisional Task Force to assist in preparing the *1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, focusing on issues of globalization of trade and finance, the changing role of the State and the private sector and information and communication technologies, and their possible implications for the status of women. UNCTAD, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, assisted women entrepreneurs in developing countries through its operational activities. The expected output of one project is a synthesis report based on individual national reports to enhance the participation of women entrepreneurs in the economy and integrate them in mainstream development. To initiate an internal debate on UNCTAD commitments regarding the cross-sectoral issue of the empowerment of women and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its policies and programmes, a Workshop on Gender Sensitization was held in December 1997. Approximately 30 Professional staff members participated.

26. The *United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme* supported a project in South Africa developed by the Centre for International Crime Prevention to counteract domestic violence. This project will initiate two pilot outreach centres for women and children in difficult situations, as well as for men who voluntarily seek help from programmes geared towards the control of anger, the management of violent expression and conflict-resolution. The budget for the project is $660,000.

27. The Governing Council of the *United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP), in recognition of the importance of gender sensitivity for the creation of effective programmes and projects in the field of sustainable development, encouraged UNEP to take concrete steps to integrate gender sensitivity and awareness into its programme and project planning. UNEP is studying the role of women in environment and development and is improving its collection, dissemination and use of gender-based analyses and sex-disaggregated data to ensure the integration of gender considerations in the development and implementation of its policies and programmes. The UNEP work programme for the biennium 1998–1999 includes the provision of information, data, methodologies, technical and legal expertise and networking capacity to ensure that both men and women participate and that gender concerns are reflected in project development and environmental decision-making.

28. The *Economic Commission for Africa* (ECA) convened a major conference entitled "African Women and Economic Development" and a series of subregional meetings on the implementation of the African Platform for Action. A kit for assessing the relevance of national plans of action and one for monitoring implementation were developed. A number of publications were also prepared such as the *African Women Report*, which will be an annual publication and which in 1998 focused on the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction. The first edition of a *Compendium of Best Practices* was being finalized, and statistical brochures were produced for each African country profiling the status of women. ECA collaborated with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the establishment of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development to help carry on the work of the advancement of women in Africa. As of June 1998, $110,000 had been pledged for the activities of the Fund.

29. The *Economic Commission for Europe* (ECE) continued to work closely with women's NGOs in the region. Within the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a seminar on the economic and social rights of women in countries in transition, was planned to be held in Warsaw for NGOs from countries with economies in transition. A meeting on gender statistics was jointly organized with INSTRAW in April 1998. The aim was to identify progress achieved and the problems faced by women in improving their economic and social situation in those countries. Gender focal points were designated in all divisions of the ECE secretariat to facilitate the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the work programme; initial intergovernmental discussions were held on gender and human settlements, the environment, trade and timber.

30. The *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean* (ECLAC), at its seventh session, held at Santiago de Chile in November 1997, approved the Santiago Consensus as an additional regional instrument to promote gender equity. The main objective of the Santiago Consensus is to accelerate the process of implementation and follow-up of the Platform for Action, the Regional Programme of

Action and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Plan of Action, by incorporating into national development strategies solutions to the problem of inequity of women through public policies and programmes at the national level. In collaboration with the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, ECLAC initiated a joint project to examine existing indicators and design new ones on the participation and leadership of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC also developed a subprogramme to promote tasks related to mainstreaming a gender perspective into the overall regional development process.

31. The *Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific* (ESCAP) made preparations to convene a high-level intergovernmental meeting in 1999 to review the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Activities continued on the economic empowerment of women; alleviating the feminization of poverty; promoting women in small businesses; training trainers for female entrepreneurship development; and promoting the human rights and legal status of women, including ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Activities were also aimed at preventing violence against women and trafficking of women and children; promoting information networking, including computer networking; and addressing such emerging issues as managing the impact of globalization on women, including the impact of the Asian financial crisis. Many of these activities were being implemented through NGOs and community-based grass-roots organizations.

32. During the period under review, the *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia* (ESCWA) completed its conceptual framework for developing region-specific data and indicators for monitoring the advancement of women in the region. ESCWA convened a regional expert group meeting in December 1997 to review and appraise the role of NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza before and after the peace accords. The meeting considered the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, among other topics. ESCWA also organized a workshop at Tunis in 1997 in collaboration with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research to raise awareness of gender statistics and methods of data compilation, and a study was completed on the conceptual framework for developing region-specific data and indicators for monitoring the advancement of women. A working group was created in 1997 to formulate a plan of action to mainstream a gender perspective into plans and programmes of ESCWA in implementation of Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2. In addition, a task force was set up for the integrated follow-up to global conferences, and funding for a project formulated in this respect was approved.

33. The *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (FAO) undertook a broad-range of activities including preparation of activities for World Food Day, 1998, the theme of which is "Women feed the world". FAO continued to implement its Special Programme for Food Security, targeting the low-income food-deficit countries, using gender analyses, and it assisted member States to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, primarily through the provision of research and policy advice and technical support activities. In addition, the FAO Socio-economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) initiative was further developed to strengthen analytical and managerial methodologies and tools at the macro, intermediate and field levels, to incorporate a gender dimension in policy and strategy formulation. Supported by a network of gender focal points, core technical review groups and the Women and Population Division, FAO established an interdepartmental Committee on Women in Development. The Gender Unit was upgraded to a Division within the newly created Sustainable Development Department. FAO also made significant progress in restructuring to decentralize operations, which is instrumental to gender mainstreaming at the regional level. The decentralized structure includes a gender specialist assigned to each of the five regional offices of FAO. The gender specialists collaborate extensively with the decentralized divisions at the regional and sub-regional levels and work directly with the FAO national offices. The decentralized structure facilitated the implementation of regional Women in Development plans of action and national action plans.

34. The *International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women* (INSTRAW) shifted its focus to the impact of globalization on the advancement of women in response to new mandates. INSTRAW serves as a co-task manger for the inter-agency task force on an electronic database of gender training materials within the United Nations system. In addition, INSTRAW is preparing a publication on ageing within a woman's life cycle as a contribution to the International Year of Older Persons, 1999; the twenty-ninth issue of *INSTRAW News* is devoted to the same theme.

35. Networking activities continued with INSTRAW focal points. The INSTRAW Web site, linked to the WomenWatch Web site, included an on-line manual on the use of computer-mediated technologies for women's organizations.

36. The Board of Trustees of INSTRAW approved two new research programmes, one entitled "Engendering the political agenda", which will be carried out in close cooperation with UNIFEM, and the other entitled "temporary labour migration of women", in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. The Institute prepared a fund-raising strategy to finance new research programmes that would cross-cut a number of critical areas of concern contained in the Platform for Action.

37. In 1997, the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) issued a "Guidance note on gender mainstreaming", the result of a senior management review of experiences and lessons learned in 20 country baseline assessments, which set out UNDP goals, management responsibilities, skills and accountability measures to move forward on its commitment to gender mainstreaming. In addition, UNDP facilitated a series of regional and national learning, consultation and briefing meetings in 1997 as a pilot programme for mainstreaming a gender perspective into its work. The Regional Gender Programme's focus is on women's economic and political empowerment, women's leadership in the peace-building process, access to science and technology, and institutional capacity development for engendering national policy analysis. Based on its policy document on integrating human rights with sustainable human development, issued in January 1998, UNDP supported actions at the regional and country levels to strengthen women's legal rights to assets and opportunities, to link human rights to women's greater participation in conflict-resolution and peace-building, and to eradicate violence against women. UNDP also made a commitment through its resident representatives to support reporting by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. With regard to indicators, UNDP contributed to a global research programme on engendering labour statistics and the valuation of unremunerated labour. In mid-1998, UNDP placed 18 UNV gender specialists in UNDP field offices. In collaboration with UNIFEM, UNDP is also supporting the placement of 10 gender advisers, principally in UNDP offices in selected United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)-designated countries to support the resident coordinator system for Beijing follow-up initiatives. Five UNDP regional programmes were committed to allocating at least 20 per cent of their respective resources to gender equality and advancement of women, targeted for example at poverty reduction, food security, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and development, access to micro-finance, violence against women, and women and leadership.

38. The *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) issued a checklist on the integration of gender equality issues in the evaluation of its programmes for use by programme specialists. Also, owing to the great success of the first version of the guidelines on non-sexist language, an improved and updated second edition in English, French and Spanish is being published for wide distribution. On the basis of the positive experience with the first two workshops for training statisticians in gathering and processing sex-disaggregated data, sponsored by UNESCO in Africa in 1996 and 1997, a similar workshop was held for Arab States. Efforts were made to include a gender approach in setting up the new International Institute for Statistics, at both the policy and the practical levels. In addition, women's contribution to peace, and more specifically to a culture of peace, was explored and enhanced in many ways, particularly in some parts of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Balkan countries. Gender mainstreaming was emphasized, particularly in the preparation of the two forthcoming UNESCO world conferences on higher education (Paris, October 1998) and science (Budapest, June 1999). Five regional forums on women and science, organized in collaboration with UNIFEM, which will precede the world conference on science, are aimed at ensuring that women are fully involved, both as participants and with respect to substance. The secretariat promoted gender mainstreaming through a network of gender focal points, and the Director-General created a considerably stronger "women and gender equality" mode of coordination, with three posts at the D-1 level, three Professional staff and three General Service staff.

39. The *United Nations Fund for Population Activities* (UNFPA) continued to employ strategies which addressed linkages between women's economic empowerment, gender equality and the exercise of reproductive and sexual rights. In addition, UNFPA supported a number of activities combining the provision of reproductive health services and information with micro-financing activities for women, and organized gender assessments of UNFPA country programmes in 13 countries. A gender theme group was created at headquarters. A study on gender focal points was initiated under the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and training on gender continued.

40. The *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) continued to carry out activities for life skills training in schools in order to promote overall health, reduce teen pregnancy and prevent human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection, female genital mutilation and violence against

women. A Latin American and Caribbean regional workshop was held in Jamaica in September 1997 to create a strategy for addressing adolescent pregnancy from a rights perspective and to share experiences and ideas for regional action. A regional project in the Middle East and North Africa examined ways to introduce the theme of children's and women's rights in the curricula of law schools. Many country offices adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child-Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as the framework in preparing country cooperation programmes. In addition, UNICEF supported collaborative efforts of NGOs, women lawyers and institutions and facilitated the review of national legislation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in several African countries. To promote girls' education, UNICEF encouraged the enrolment of girls and improvement in the quality of their education in many African countries. In 1997, UNICEF collaborated with the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA and ECA in the organization of the Expert Group Meeting on Adolescent Girls and Their Rights. In 1997, UNICEF also supported the Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development, which was instrumental in establishing a regional women's NGO network on women and peace-building.

41. Past experiences of the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) produced some operational strategies and approaches for refugee women that have had a positive impact and are being documented. The People Oriented Planning (POP) training programme of UNHCR continued to effectively provide UNHCR staff and implementing partners with a framework for gender analysis in policy development and needs assessment in protection and programme interventions. In 1997, 27 POP workshops were held in 23 locations. A total of 3,023 persons (UNHCR and implementing partners) have been trained in this process since its inception in 1989. Increased emphasis is now being placed on the training of senior staff and representatives. Five regional workshops for representatives were planned for 1998. Indicators from the Career Management Services were revised to include issues of gender mainstreaming, refugee women, children and adolescents with a view to ensuring gender-sensitive managers.

42. During the period under review, the *United Nations Industrial Development Organization* (UNIDO) continued its strong support for the women entrepreneurship development programme, which is one of the 10 integrated packages of services provided by UNIDO. UNIDO reported that gender mainstreaming would be pursued, and the exact modalities would be elaborated upon the assignment of a gender focal point.

43. In the new structure of the *World Bank*, gender has been placed in the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network (PREM), allowing a focus on gender as a core development issue. The Gender Sector Board, with representatives from all regions and networks, has become fully operational. One of its concerns is to ensure that gender issues are addressed in all aspects of the Bank's operational, research and policy work, taking into account the fact that fairer treatment of women can increase both equity and economic efficiency. Women's banking, rural financing schemes, social funds, lending for basic needs, community development funds and a whole range of lending activities targeted women with increasing success. Also, the Bank's poverty assessments became more sophisticated in their treatment of gender issues. Several country assistance strategies (CAS) for countries with large gender gaps included innovative work to identify gender issues in a wide range of sectors, both directly and indirectly. Gender coordination units were being created in all regional offices, and many resident missions have a gender coordinator who often also works with NGOs. The World Bank sponsored a Gender and Development Workshop in April 1998, which brought together economists, other social scientists, gender specialists and researchers from inside and outside the Bank for a dialogue on gender research and policy priorities. Also, gender tools and techniques have been made easily available to staff through the internal gender Web page and the Gender Knowledge Management System and the external gender home page. The Bank helped to finance an innovative participatory approach to women's literacy, which is being implemented by Action Aid in seven countries. Together with ECA, the Bank sponsored the International Conference on African Women and Economic Development in April 1998, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of ECA, contributing $220,000 to the cost of the conference.

44. The *World Food Programme* (WFP) participated in the inter-agency task force on gender issues in Afghanistan and workshops and meetings, including a United Nations gender mainstreaming workshop in September 1997 and a United Nations gender experts workshop at Tunis in April 1998. Various tools and guidelines were developed to ensure a gender perspective and help staff and managers in formulating projects. Guidelines for Mother and Child Health (MCH) projects were being developed to improve targeting of the most vulnerable groups. Gender-sensitive guidelines for project planning were being finalized. A network of gender focal points was established at WFP

headquarters and in field offices. In addition, in regions where particular weaknesses regarding gender issues and mainstreaming have been identified, WFP is in the process of recruiting regional gender advisers.

45. The work of the *World Health Organization* (WHO) on violence against women and female genital mutilation is based firmly on the recognition that these practices are closely linked to prevailing gender norms in which women are usually undervalued and subordinated in various ways. In addition to developing the technical base for these issues, WHO played an important advocacy role and continued to be committed to strengthening the participation of women and women's organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of health research, policies and programmes. Much of the work of WHO was undertaken in collaboration with women's NGOs. Several specific activities were aimed at strengthening women's participation in WHO and in country programmes. This work entailed both a technical and political process requiring shifts in organizational cultures and ways of thinking, as well as in goals, structures and resource allocations. Gender is one of the four core values of the new global health policy: "Health for All in the 21st century". All six of the WHO regional offices have focal points on women, health and development, which promote work in the area of women's health, and gender and development.

46. The *World Intellectual Property Organization* (WIPO) has begun organizing an exhibition on the topic of women inventors, which covers women inventors from all regions of the world, to be inaugurated on the occasion of the opening of its visitors' centre.

47. The *Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS* (UNAIDS) continued to work actively to support the development of gender-sensitive multisectoral programmes and strategies on HIV/AIDS. At the global level, the institutional mechanisms for this purpose include the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender. At the national level, inter-agency theme groups on HIV/AIDS have been established in 152 countries. These are composed of HIV focal points from the UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies. To ensure the provision of affordable preventive and care services relating to HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS is collaborating actively with the Division for the Advancement of Women in the preparation of documentation for the high-level review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, five years after its adoption. Experts on women and HIV were fielded to conduct studies for presentation at an expert group meeting on women and health organized by the Division in collaboration with WHO in Tunisia in September 1998. A gender and HIV adviser was appointed by UNAIDS in New York to coordinate work with the co-sponsors. UNAIDS collaborated actively with UNDP in developing a topic module on gender concerns in HIV and development. This was incorporated in the UNDP capacity-building strategy on gender and has been contributing towards strengthening national capacity and enhancing understanding of key partners about the gender dimensions of the epidemic.

48. The *United Nations University* Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH) prepared a plenary session paper entitled "Gender and telecommunications – an agenda for policy". The paper and the subsequent discussion thereon led to further commitment to a gender dimension which would be incorporated in all aspects of the work of the International Telecommunication Union. UNU/INTECH also provided a gender dimension to a Virtual Conference on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Jobs, organized by ILO in May/June 1998.

49. The current strategic plan of the *United Nations Volunteers* (UNV) programme, "Strategy 2000", for the period 1997–2000, makes gender equality a key area of concern. This involves continued affirmative action towards gender balance among serving United Nations volunteers; increased attention to gender dimensions of UNV-supported projects; and gender-sensitization training for United Nations volunteers, UNV programme officers in UNDP country offices and UNV headquarters staff. Gender training has been included as an integral part of the initial briefing programmes for all United Nations volunteers and UNV programme officers. Gender training has also been initiated for UNV headquarters staff in Bonn.

III. National strategies and action plans

50. In the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Governments were encouraged to prepare national action plans for the implementation of the Platform for Action. As of 10 August 1998, 98 Member States and one observer State had submitted their national action plans or strategies and information on implementation to the United Nations Secretariat.

51. The Division for the Advancement of Women prior to the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, has analysed a total of 86 of those national action plans. Many of the plans were undertaken in collaboration with policy makers and actors from civil society. National machineries, many of which were created or strengthened after the Beijing Conference, played a key role in preparing

national action plans. Some covered all critical areas of concern, but others reflected national priorities and were limited to certain critical areas, reflecting regional differences and preferences. The plans highlighted the supportive role played by the international community, in particular the United Nations system, in the drafting and implementation process in many countries. The majority of plans contained both general policy recommendations and concrete action proposals. Only a few established comprehensive time-bound targets and benchmarks or indicators for monitoring. Most action plans did not propose budgets or indicate sources of financing for the actions indicated. Completion and monitoring of national action plans constitutes one aspect of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and will be useful for assessing policies and projects that have been successfully implemented when the General Assembly meets in 2000. The General Assembly will examine how policy declarations have been converted into concrete policies followed by actions, which benchmarks have been met, and which indicators were appropriate for measurement purposes.

IV. Reported activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions of civil society

52. At the international, regional and national levels, non-governmental organizations continued to pursue the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. While these activities were not reported systematically to the Secretariat, some have been brought to the attention of the Division for the Advancement of Women since the previous reports were submitted to the General Assembly and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session. Since then, a number of events have occurred under the auspices of non-governmental organizations, which are noted here as examples of the widespread follow-up to the Conference by civil society.

53. As part of its ongoing effort to monitor progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) in March 1998 issued its latest report on the implementation of progress to coincide with the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The report, entitled "Mapping progress", contained information collected from Governments and non-governmental organizations in 90 countries and analysed successes and setbacks in addressing the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, with special emphasis on the impact of macroeconomic policies on women's rights to employment, health and education.

54. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) actively followed up the Fourth World Conference through its programmes at the international, regional and national levels. Among these were legal advisory services to women in Colombia; legal counselling and education for Palestinian women; advocacy for the equal and reproductive health needs of women in marginalized communities in Nepal; campaigns against unsafe abortion in the Russian Federation and South Africa; campaigns to end female genital mutilation in Egypt, Kenya and Uganda; and income-generation activities and advocacy in China, Malaysia and Thailand to empower women and girls.

55. Following recommendations from their workshop on democratization and violence against women held at the NGO Forum in Beijing in 1995, the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) launched a new campaign in the spring of 1998 against institutional discrimination against women in the financial sector. AAWORD addressed the particular financial needs of women from the South and increasing poverty among them, and advocated for gender equality in international financial policies.

56. The training of trainers has been a preferred activity of women's groups and non-governmental organizations as it has the potential to reach out to a large number of people in communities. Thirty young women from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific participated in a World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) Training of Trainers Workshop in Sri Lanka from 24 April to 2 May 1998. The participants learned how to build their skills and knowledge in order to become better trainers of other young women. They exchanged tips and training techniques and analysed different approaches to common problems.

57. A training of trainers workshop entitled "Women in politics in Central America: regional advocacy" was held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 20 June to 1 July 1998, organized by Global Women in Politics, Cenzontle and the Central American branch of the Women in Politics Network. Women campaigners active in the field of human rights and community-based women's projects came together from countries in Central America to share strategies and tools for increasing women's political influence. They also discussed a model strategy for training, especially political training and advocacy.

58. The Centre for Women's Global Leadership organized its sixth Women's Global Leadership Institute, with a focus on building a culture of human rights, from 8 to 19 June 1998. This intensive training programme involved 25 selected women's human rights activists from all over the world and included workshops, panel discussions and theme group discussions on such subjects as violence against women, reproductive health, funding and networking, and resulted in a public forum on 18 June 1998.

59. The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) held a regional conference on gender and communication policy for 32 participants from anglophone African countries in Cape Town, South Africa, from 1 to 4 June 1998. Country reports were presented by those who were working in the field of gender and the media, and the panel presentations focused on, *inter alia*, images and stereotypes in the media, violence and the media, and poverty and its effect on women's participation in the media.

60. A Conference on the World of Women's Information was held in the Netherlands from 22 to 26 August 1998. The Conference was initiated by the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement. It was held as a follow-up to the agreement by Governments at the Beijing Conference to use women's information as an instrument for policy-making. The Netherlands Conference called for strengthening alliances between Governments and women's information centres and for developing and promoting the accessibility and visibility of women's information services and activities. The latter will be facilitated by a source book on women's information centres around the world, which is in preparation.

61. Other meetings were held on related topics, for example, the Expert Meeting on European Women's Thesaurus, held at Brussels on 16 and 17 May 1998, organized by a consortium of NGOs, and the meeting entitled "Electronic Networking and Resourcing: Strategies for Women's Information Centres", held at Manila from 20 to 23 April 1998, organized by Isis International, Manila.

62. Further examples of NGO follow-up can also be cited. The Solidarity Front for Women Workers (SFWW) in Taiwan Province of China organized the World Action Forum for Sex Workers' Rights in May 1998. The Committee for Asian Women mobilized a signature campaign for ratification of the ILO Conventions on Part-time Workers (No. 175) and Home Work (No. 177). The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre organized a regional workshop on women and health in Dhaka in November 1997 and, also in Dhaka, the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific held a regional workshop entitled "Towards Gender Equity: Poverty, Rights and Participation" whose objective was to advocate compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action. The United Nations Environment and Development United Kingdom Committee and Gender 21 hosted a conference in June on gender and humanity into the twenty-first century, in London in June 1998. The African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town and the Association for Women in Development held a seminar on transformational power and leadership for gender equality and social change in Cape Town in June. The NGO Working Group on Girls conducted a survey of 248 NGOs in 87 countries on progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action which indicated that while commitments have been made and laws passed, the actual implementation is not consistent. Girls are enrolled in schools but the drop-out rate continues to be high and while public awareness of violence is increasing, sexual and physical abuse of girls within and outside the family is still prevalent in all regions of the world.

V. Means of implementation, including human and financial requirements

A. Gender-sensitive programming and budgeting and resource mobilization

63. A few respondents addressed the question of gender-sensitive programming and budgeting and financial resource mobilization.

64. FAO reported that it does not have a system for gender-sensitive budgeting. However, it makes use of, and actively seeks, extrabudgetary funds for the implementation of gender-responsive programmes, such as the SEAGA approach and programmes within the household resource management field. The programme and finance committees avoided budget cuts in areas related to women and development for the biennium 1998–1999.

65. During the period under review, UNDP increased its core funding resources to address gender equality and advancement of women issues. To this end, a global gender equality programme was approved in 1997 for $7.8 million which focuses on research and application of policy and analytic frameworks for gender equality, capacity development and learning networks, constituency building and partnerships for the Fourth World Conference on Women follow-up, and building synergies with regional initiatives for the advancement of women.

66. While preparing its work plans for the biennium 1998–1999, UNESCO paid particular attention to strengthening women-specific projects and to gender mainstreaming in all fields of its competence. Compared with previous years, a larger proportion of UNESCO regular programme funds was earmarked for activities that benefit women, girls and gender equality. The new overall system of monitoring UNESCO programme implementation will assist the gender coordinator in monitoring the progress of women-specific projects and activities and their periodic evaluation. This will be reinforced with the use of specific budget codes for women and gender activities, which have been initiated to ensure that these activities do not suffer possible budget cuts in the future.

67. The World Bank undertook an initiative related to financing projects and programmes to promote the Beijing Platform for Action which involved cooperation with multilateral and bilateral donors and with NGOs to provide funding for microenterprises through the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest. Also, since Beijing, the Bank has done much to integrate girls' education into its country dialogues, country assistance strategies and lending programmes. Notably, overall annual lending for education is projected to be above $2 billion by the end of the decade, and close to $800 million is expected to go to girls' education.

B. Initiatives to increase the proportion of women in Professional posts

68. While the goal of achieving gender equality in the United Nations has not yet been achieved, during the period under review a number of positive measures were undertaken throughout the system in this regard. This included a number of measures implemented by the Office of Human Resources Management, including the opening of all vacancy announcements at the P-5 level and above to external candidates to widen the pool of eligible female candidates. Also, executive searches have been conducted with the primary goal of identifying and attracting female candidates, particularly from developing countries. Résumés received from female candidates are now handled on a priority basis. Additional information may be found in the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/53/376).

69. With regard to staff policies, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has adopted measures to recruit personnel in accordance with established procedures and transparent processes to ensure that it is served by persons having the required qualifications, experience and expertise. The existing imbalance and disparities in gender and geographical representation, especially at the senior levels must be rectified through affirmative action.

70. In UNDP more than 30 per cent of the senior managers at headquarters are women. However, there was uneven progress in the organization, particularly at the field level. In January 1998, UNDP approved a new policy that provides increased female staffing targets, accountability measures for those targets, and a recruitment policy.

71. UNEP assisted its staff in complying with United Nations directives and achieving targets related to the hiring and promotion of women, as well as in establishing monitoring techniques to assess and report on progress.

72. UNV continued to promote highly qualified women volunteers. As a result, approximately 50 per cent of the UNV programme officers in the UNDP country offices are women. Currently 35 per cent of all serving United Nations volunteer specialists and field workers are women and efforts are being undertaken to increase this ratio.

73. A joint UNDP/UNIFEM/UNV pilot project to place UNV gender specialists in UNDP country offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to increase gender expertise in United Nations country programmes was recently launched through a workshop held at INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo in May 1998. The majority of those specialists are women.

VI. Conclusions

74. Further progress was made during the period under review on the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. The adoption by the Economic and Social Council of agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming and the follow-up resolution adopted by the Council in 1998 (resolution 1998/43) constitute the most comprehensive intergovernmental actions to date on gender mainstreaming. They constitute a firm basis from which to proceed expeditiously with concrete steps to achieve measurable progress in gender mainstreaming at all levels and in all areas. In resolution 1998/26 concerning operational activities and advancement of women, the Council provided guidance to the United Nations system in implementing the Platform for Action and called for gender issues to be taken up in the triennial comprehensive policy review. The General Assembly may wish to take action on the recommendations of the Council, including calling for future triennial comprehensive reviews to integrate a gender analysis and

reflect developments with respect to the advancement of women in operational activities of the United Nations system.

75. The report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001 (E/CN.6/1998/3) provided a detailed analysis of the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action by the United Nations. A new system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women to cover the period 2002–2005 will be formulated. The initial outline of the plan will be considered by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality in 1999. The draft plan will then be prepared and submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women for comments at its forty-fourth session, in 2000, as well as to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000.

76. As noted previously, a broader assessment including indicators of and recommendations for further action with regard to capacity-building for gender mainstreaming at the national level remains to be made. This might be addressed on a priority basis during the consideration of critical area of concern IV.H (Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women)[4] by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1999.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.2.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.XVII.10.

[4] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* ..., chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, chap. IV.H.